

Daily Dependence

Each day we need a daily dose of God. Depend on Him!

★ Thought for the Day – Don't Harden Your Heart ★

Posted on December 23, 2017December 26, 2017 by Daily Dependence

Two years ago God placed on my heart to study the Christmas Story in greater detail than I have ever done before. It led me into a series of posts that lasted for 25 days (<https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/category/reason-for-the-season/?order=asc>), exploring the "Reasons" that we should be "Thankful" during the Christmas Advent Season; while at the same time, delving into the all-too-familiar stories that have become commonplace in order to gain a fresh perspective on the birth of Christ! It was an amazing endeavor, one which meant a lot to me in my personal walk with Jesus who truly is *the Reason for the Season*!



As part of the series, I posted this blog called ★ Day 07 – Reason for the Season – Unwavering Acceptance ★ (<https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/2015/12/07/%E2%98%85-day-07-reason-for-the-season-unwavering-acceptance-%E2%98%85/>), of how incredible Joseph, the fiancé of Mary and eventual stepfather of Jesus was to accept his small, but integral part of the birth of Christ. I was just reading this devotional called "Advent Adoration (<http://bible.com/r/2RW>)" by Jon Guerra who statement about the life of Joseph:

f whom the prophet testified. Jesus will save sins. Those are gigantic destinies. But what interestingly, there is nothing about his own life, in the life of these two: the virgin and her son."

How did he feel but all of this? Not many which has very little about this man who God has no place in the Gospel of Mark or John. In times. It is only in Matthew that we find any 8-25 (<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?v=2%3A13-23&version=NLT>), which is not a that handles all the logistics of getting Mary to

Bethlehem and finding lodging for her to have the baby. Then when their lives were in danger, Joseph led them to safety to Egypt while Herod was alive. And then he was responsible for bringing them out of Egypt to Nazareth. Nowhere in the story does he get any recognition and once they moved to Nazareth he is only mentioned one more time in Luke 2:41-52



(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A41-52&version=NLT;ESV>). That's just crazy to me! As I was thinking about this humble carpenter a question came to mind... *What if Joseph had said no?*



None of this would have been possible if Joseph had *hardened his heart*. If you are not familiar with that phrase, it simply means to turn off your emotions and stop feeling kind or loving towards someone.

★ **Click here** (<https://youtu.be/AywOtNDvEmc>) **if you would prefer to listen to the Podcast of this blog post.** ★

I love “what if” stories and how they examine how different life would be if one thing was changed. What if...when the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream he refused to be a part of the plan and closed his heart to what God wanted to do through him? I don't think anyone would have blamed him if he had. I mean what would you do if the woman you were betrothed to showed up pregnant saying that an angel visited her and that she was carrying God's Son who was the long-awaited

Messiah? That is a lot to take in! Nothing could have prepared him for that news! As Joseph was faced with a very pregnant fiancé which he had not part of and all of his plans for the future were ruined, he could have yielded to doubt and speculation, but instead Joseph accepted God's call on his life.

Maybe you are like Joseph and life has not gone the way you had expected whether that be the loss of a loved one, a physical illness or a betrayal from someone you trusted. Maybe there is not much happening right now to be joyful about and maybe the last thing you want to do is celebrate the birth of God's Son because of how hopeless your situation is. I would like to encourage you today that you have a choice just like Joseph...you can allow circumstances to rob your joy or you can look up to a Heavenly Father who wants so much more for your life!

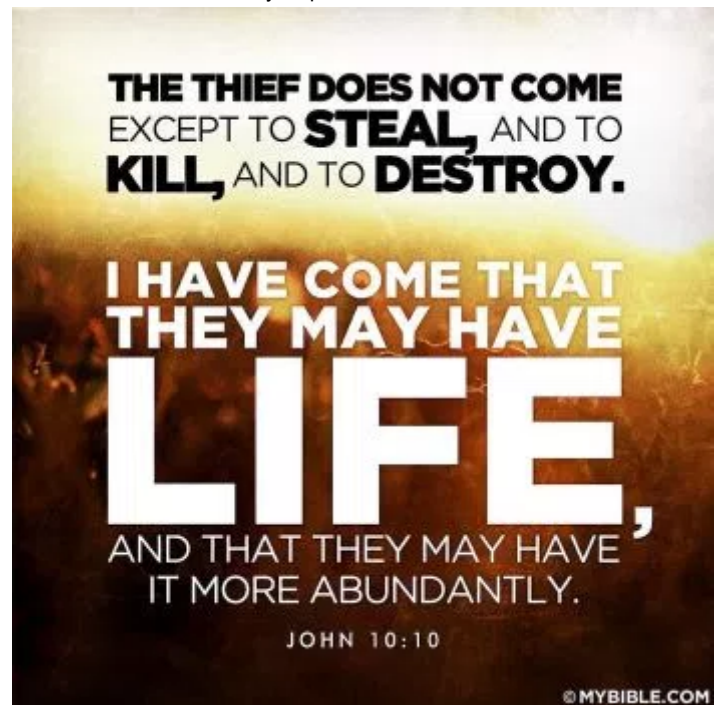


God has a gift for you but it is up to you whether or not you will receive it! In John 10:10 Jesus reveals what that gift is:

"The thief [the devil] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly."

If this Christmas season you find yourself alone and hopeless, feeling as if you do not belong, **KNOW THIS...** Jesus came to give us not only life, but Life in **ABUNDANCE**...the offer is open to all who will receive the free gift of salvation if you will trust Him today! The Salvation God provided through His Son is for everyone!

This Offer NEVER Ends!! Get your life on the right path for **FREE** when you accept Jesus Christ as your savior.



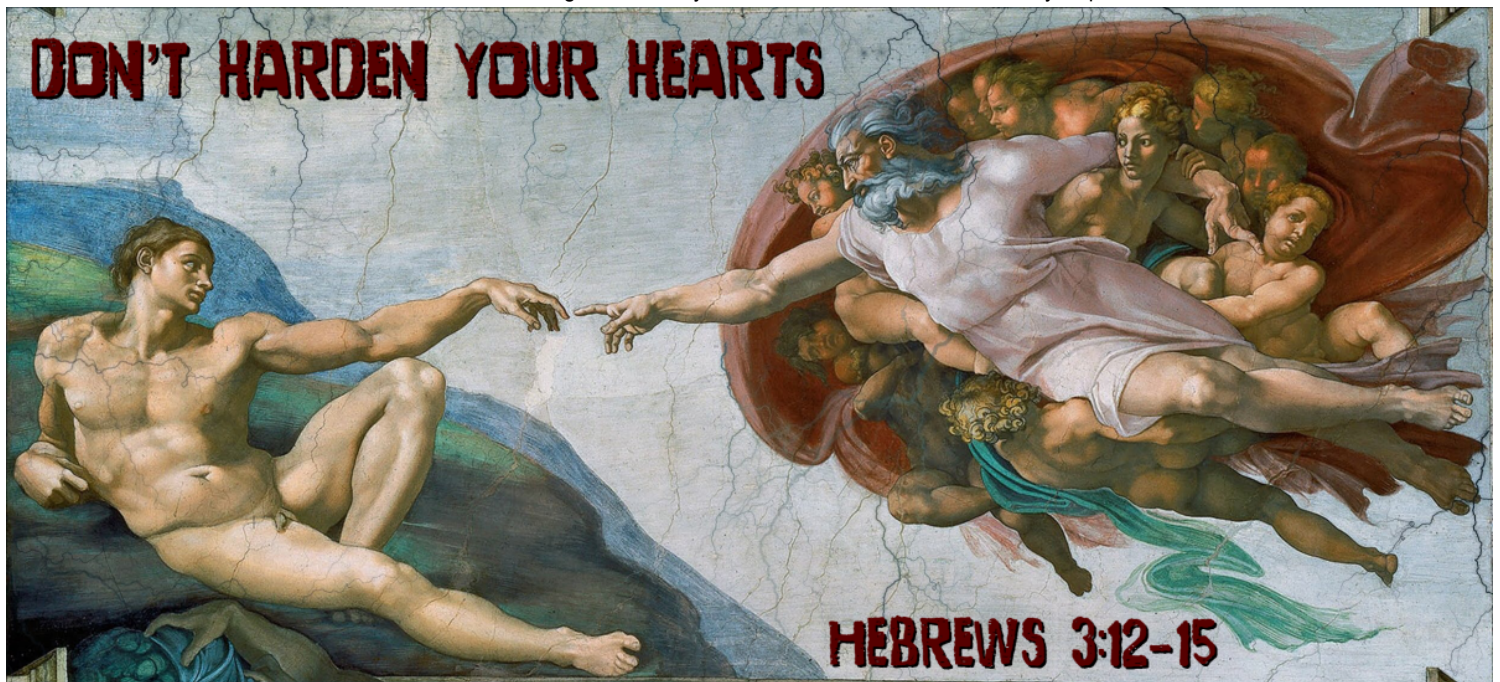
Fine Print: If you are ready to accept Jesus, here is a simple prayer to pray...

Lord I am a sinner. I have tried to run my life and failed, I cannot do it on my own. I need a savior. Please wash me, cleanse me, and create in me a new heart. I am sorry for my sins and I believe that Jesus died as the payment for those sins. Take my life, I give it to you. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

If you prayed that in earnest, I have great news! You are now a son or daughter of God! And I would love to help you along in your decision, just contact me at dailydependence@gmail.com (<mailto:dailydependence@gmail.com>).

If you are already a Christian but yet you are struggling today, I want to encourage you from Hebrews 3:12-15 (NLT):

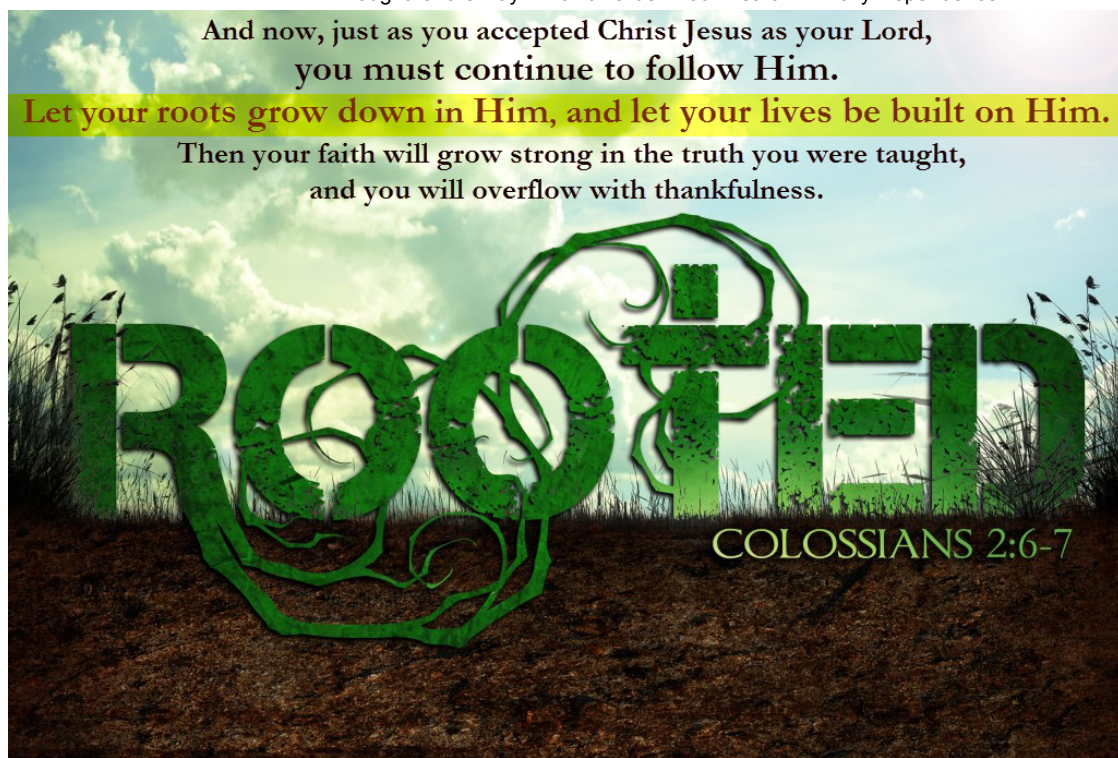
“Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. Remember what it says: “Today when you hear His voice, don’t harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled.””



I read this scripture recently with my 5:00 am Fight Club, (no not with boxing gloves – it is similar to a Bible Study but we are fighting to grow spiritually in addition to reading the Bible...★ [Click here if you want to know more](https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/2017/01/29/%E2%98%85-thought-for-the-day-community-that-matters-%E2%98%85/) ★ (<https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/2017/01/29/%E2%98%85-thought-for-the-day-community-that-matters-%E2%98%85/>)). Well as we were discussing this, God reminded me of Michelangelo's masterpiece on the Sistine Chapel ceiling called "The Creation of Adam" which portrays the scene from the Book of Genesis when God breathed life into Adam. What always gets me is the stark contrast of the lukewarm reach of Adam and the outstretched hand of God. It is a great illustration of how He is always actively reaching out to us, just waiting for us to turn to Him in our distress. Brandon Webb made this powerful point of how we are just like Adam and tend to have a half-hearted approach towards God:

"People are passionate or zealous about many things. We are passionate about work, striving to succeed. We are passionate about possessions, striving to have more. We are passionate about hobbies and interests. We are passionate about our sports teams. Think of this...We always have enough time, energy and money for those things about which we are passionate. The real question is: are we passionate about that which is most important? Are we passionate about God? "

Where do you place your priorities? Are you passionate about pursuing your relationship with God? Once of my favorite verses on this is from Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT)...

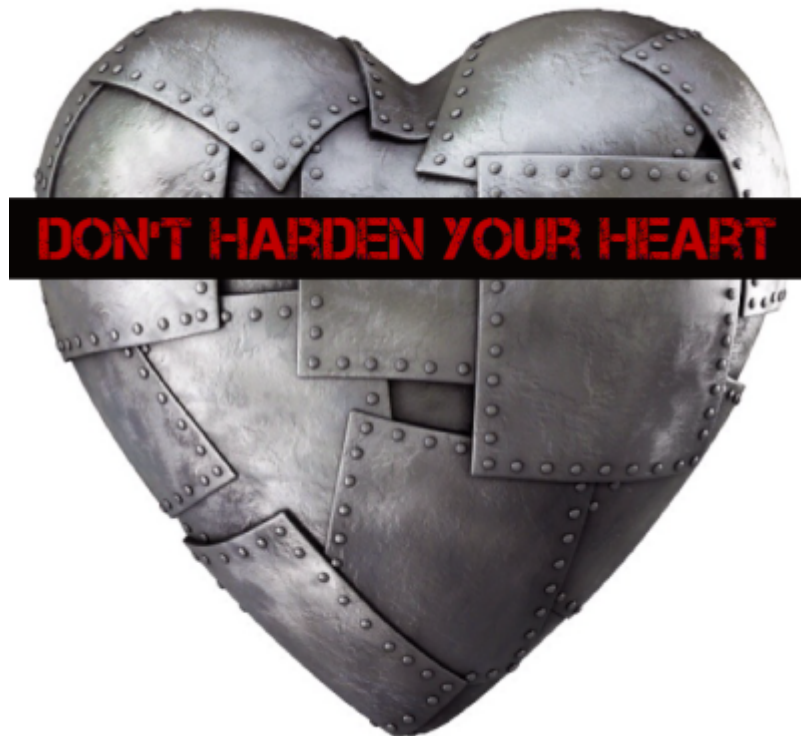


“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him. Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.”

Did you know that the root zone of a tree can vary from 1 1/2 to 4 times the width of the tree canopy? So when you apply that concept to our walk with Christ, to be *ROOTED in Him* and to *BUILD our lives on Him* will take time, energy and commitment to grow more and more like Him! When you think of Joseph in this context, it's clear that he must have had tremendous zeal and passion for God to be chosen to raise His son. I close with this final thought about Jesus' stepfather...

“Centuries later we celebrate Joseph's life, knowing that he was everything a father should be – spiritually perceptive, compassionate, humble, faithful, loving and protective toward the family the Lord had given him.” Ann Spangler and Robert Wolgemuth, Men of the Bible: A One-Year Devotional Study of Men in Scripture (<http://links.biblegateway.mkt4731.com/ctt?kn=7&ms=NTQ5MjkwODAS1&r=MjY2MDc4ODk2ODES1&b=0&j=MTI0NTg0NzE5OQS2&mt=1&rt=0>).

Can the same be said of you? If not, you can choose a different path if *don't harden you heart!*



Today If you hear the Holy Spirit calling you to action, do not harden your heart because you will miss the opportunity of what God wants to do in and through you! We celebrate Christmas today because a humble carpenter named Joseph didn't!

For those who maybe have never read the Christmas Story in totality, here are the major stories:

- The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold – [Luke 1:5-25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+1%3A5-25&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+1%3A5-25&version=NLT).
- The Birth of Jesus Foretold – [Luke 1:26-38](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A26-38&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A26-38&version=NLT).
- Mary Visits Elizabeth – [Luke 1:39-56](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+1%3A39-56&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+1%3A39-56&version=NLT).
- Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son – [Matthew 1:18-25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18-25&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18-25&version=NLT).
- The Birth of John the Baptist – [Luke 1:57-66](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+1%3A57-66&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+1%3A57-66&version=NLT).
- Zechariah's Prophecy – [Luke 1:67-80](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+1%3A67-80&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+1%3A67-80&version=NLT).
- The Birth of Jesus – [Luke 2:1-7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+2%3A1-7&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+2%3A1-7&version=NLT).
- The Shepherds and Angels – [Luke 2:8-20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+2%3A8-20&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+2%3A8-20&version=NLT).
- Jesus Is Presented in the Temple – [Luke 2:21-24](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+2%3A21-24&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+2%3A21-24&version=NLT).
- The Prophecy of Simeon – [Luke 2:25-35](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+2%3A25-35&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+2%3A25-35&version=NLT).

- The Prophecy of Anna – [Luke 2:36-38](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A36-38&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A36-38&version=NLT).
- Return to Nazareth – [Luke 2:39-40](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A39-40&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A39-40&version=NLT).
- Visitors from the East – [Matthew 2:1-12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1-12&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1-12&version=NLT).
- The Escape to Egypt – [Mathew 2:13-18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A13-18+&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A13-18+&version=NLT).
- The Return to Nazareth – [Mathew 2:19-23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A19-23+&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A19-23+&version=NLT).

Or if you want to read it completely through – [Luke 1:5-56, Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:57 – 2:40, and Matthew 2:1-23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A5-Luke+1%3A56%2C+Matthew+1%3A18-25%2C+Luke+1%3A57--Luke+2%3A40%2C+Matthew+2%3A1-23&version=NLT) (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A5-Luke+1%3A56%2C+Matthew+1%3A18-25%2C+Luke+1%3A57--Luke+2%3A40%2C+Matthew+2%3A1-23&version=NLT).

If you're interested in digging deeper, check out:

You can start from the beginning of ★ [#Reason For The Season – 25 Days of Thankfulness series](https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/category/reason-for-the-season/?order=asc) by clicking [Here](https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/category/reason-for-the-season/?order=asc) ★ (https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/category/reason-for-the-season/?order=asc).

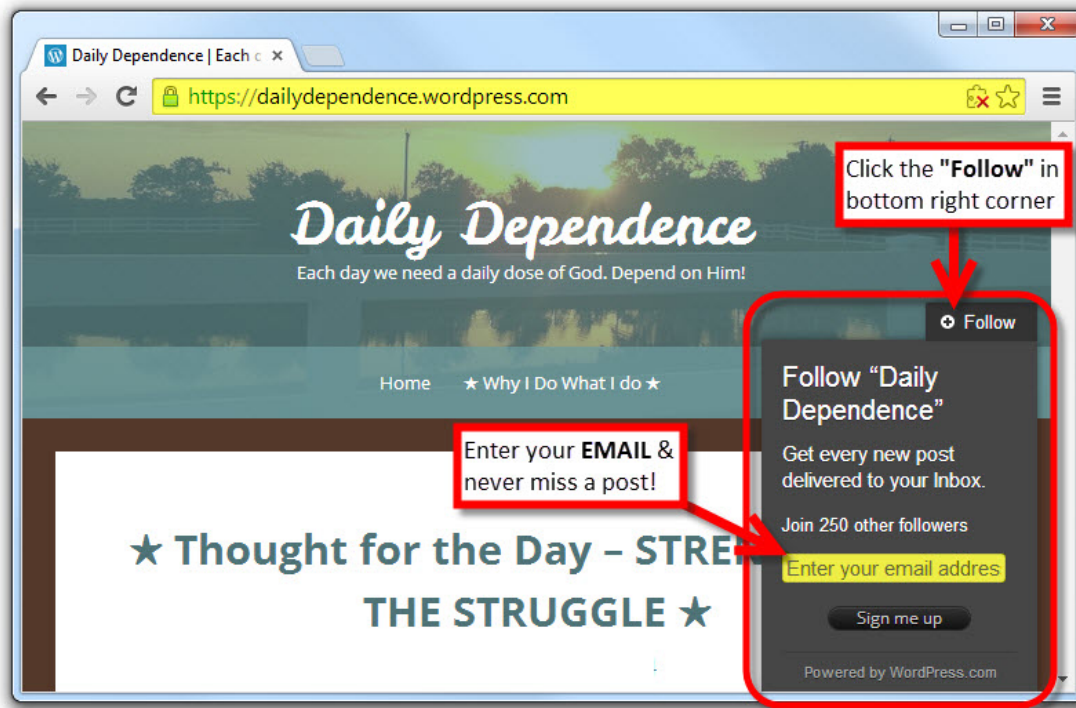
★ [Thought for the Day – Community That Matters](https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/2017/01/29/%E2%98%85-thought-for-the-day-community-that-matters-%E2%98%85/) ★ (https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/2017/01/29/%E2%98%85-thought-for-the-day-community-that-matters-%E2%98%85/).

★ [Thought for the Day – What's On The Inside?](https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/2016/02/04/%E2%98%85-thought-for-the-day-whats-on-the-inside-%E2%98%85/) ★ (https://dailydependence.wordpress.com/2016/02/04/%E2%98%85-thought-for-the-day-whats-on-the-inside-%E2%98%85/).

The message called “[Serving; The Key To Abundant Life](https://vimeo.com/244645211) (https://vimeo.com/244645211)” by Barry Parker in which he shares the importance of incorporating the (4) serving environments seen in Jesus’ life – personal devotion to the Father, serving the crowd, serving the Spiritual Family and serving the inner circle could be the secret to abundant life.

The message called “[The Benefit of Doubt](https://youtu.be/L5m2YSQLgbA) (https://youtu.be/L5m2YSQLgbA)” by Steven Furtick which is one of the most amazing Christmas messages I have heard on the life of Joseph! Absolutely amazing!!

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(<https://dailydependence.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/to-follow-daily-dependence-blog.jpg>).

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3 thoughts on “★ Thought for the Day – Don't Harden Your Heart ★”

1. **Mike** says:

December 24, 2017 at 11:19 am

Great one didn't realize how little Joseph was mentioned-

Reply

○ **Daily Dependence** says:

December 26, 2017 at 2:37 pm

Yeah and what's amazing is that on Sunday Steven Furtick preaching an incredible message called "The Benefit of Doubt."

The Benefit Of The Doubt | Pastor Steven Furtick



One of the most amazing Christmas message on the life of Joseph!

Reply

2. **★ Day 07 – Reason for the Season – Unwavering Acceptance ★ – Daily Dependence** says:

December 26, 2017 at 3:14 pm

[...] ★ Thought for the Day – Don't Harden Your Heart ★ [...]

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